

the bottom in the condition of our bridges. These are the reasons that the highway funding formula and the transportation bill is so vitally important in my State. The potential funding that this bill provides is a huge step in the right direction to save lives on Missouri's highways, roads, and bridges. Last week, I told the story of driving across some of the bridges in our State where you can look down and see the water. That is not reassuring. They don't design them as "see-through" bridges. Years and years of decay have opened up gaping holes, which is a frightening prospect when you are crossing the Missouri River or the Mississippi River.

I urge my colleagues to work through the budget and the appropriations process to determine that we will make the real funding commitment and that we will meet that funding commitment that we put forward in this bill.

When I began this process, when I started work on it, I had two primary goals. One was for the transportation bill to increase the overall size of the pie for highways, and getting that 4.3 cents in is vitally important. Secondly, Missouri, as one of the donor States, needed to get its share up. I believe these two conditions are met.

You may recall last fall when filibusters held up the bill I crafted a bipartisan interim solution that enabled highway funding to continue through May 1 of this year, which means, as the distinguished occupant of the chair knows, we will be the bedeviled by those orange and white barrels this year. They will be springing up on our highways like the summer road flowers along the highways. They are going to be blossoming. I am pleased to be causing those headaches. But we need to continue the orange and white barrels; we need to continue that construction.

I know the funding debates are far from over. As I mentioned last Friday, there are reasonable people who have passionate differences, and there is nothing like a highway funding fight to bring out those differences. We hope that it is merely a matter of verbal debate. But when it comes to highway funding, these differences have been visible and audible. I want to express again my sincerest thanks to Senator CHAFEE, Senator BAUCUS, and Senator WARNER, for their leadership in working with committee members to avoid the "guerrilla warfare" that has been known to erupt on the highway bill in the past. I told the committee that I thought the leadership had achieved a rough system of justice that would make it possible for us to move this bill forward.

Nobody is going to get everything that they want, but I believe that reasonable compromises have been made, and there may still be more made. We need to get this bill moving. I look forward to working with the members of the committee and my other colleagues throughout this process to achieve the goals that we all have for

our States, that I have for my State of Missouri, but, most important, that we all must have for our national transportation policy.

Again, my thanks to the leadership and my congratulations for the great staff work. We look forward to working on it. It will be an interesting debate.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I want to thank the distinguished Senator from Missouri for those kind comments. We have worked closely together, and he has been a valuable member of the committee, not only on highway matters, but in other matters likewise. We look forward to his vigorous support as we move forward with this legislation.

Now, the Senator from Minnesota, I believe, has matters to discuss.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, let me also associate myself with the remarks of the Senator from Missouri. I think all of us owe a debt of gratitude to our colleagues, Senator CHAFEE and Senator BAUCUS, for their determination and doggedness in getting this bill on the floor. This is a very important piece of legislation, I think, for all of our States.

Mr. President, I think the Senator from Rhode Island, in a moment or two, has some questions he wants to put to me. While I am waiting for that, let me just, for my colleagues' information, give the official poverty level income for a family of one woman and two children. It is \$12,516. And 150 percent is \$18,774.

This amendment, everybody should understand, doesn't dictate anything. It doesn't say that every family of three ought to be able to make that income of \$18,000. It doesn't mandate anything; it doesn't dictate anything. It simply says—look, I think people trust me, and I have traveled the country, and I am telling you that some of what is going on—I am not pointing the finger at any particular point, although it is uneven. It is harsher in some States than in others, but we do need to understand exactly what is going on, whether or not these families are able to find jobs and whether or not these are jobs with decent wages, and what is going on with their children. We need for the Secretary to kind of bring together some data and present reports to us so we have knowledge about this.

I see the majority leader on the floor. I would be happy to yield to the majority leader. Then if my colleague has questions he wants to put to me, I would be pleased to respond.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Minnesota for yielding me this moment of time. It won't be long.

GOLDEN GAVEL AWARDED TO SENATOR PAT ROBERTS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, since the 1960s, the Senate has recognized those dedicated Members who preside over the Senate for 100 hours with the Golden Gavel Award. Today, we add to the list of Golden Gavel recipients the current Presiding Officer, Senator PAT ROBERTS of the great State of Kansas, whose presiding hours now total over 100 hours, effective as of today.

I want to say this, too: I have found that, as Presiding Officer, Senator ROBERTS is reliable and enthusiastic. He maintains order, sometimes running the majority leader from the floor of the Senate Chamber if he insists on talking when not properly recognized. He maintains order with a firm hand, but, most importantly, he is consistently willing to come to the Chamber and preside over the activities here in this Chamber. He is able to handle problems that arise in an appropriate way and without hesitation. So it is with sincere appreciation that I announce the newest recipient of the Golden Gavel Award, Senator PAT ROBERTS of Kansas.

I have already determined that when we have moments of really important legislation, and when rulings of the Chair are going to be necessary and need to be made rather quickly so we can complete the business of the day, we have a new suspect that can assume the position as Presiding Officer, Senator ROBERTS of Kansas. Thank you very much for the job you have done in helping us to preside and keep the Chamber in order.

[Applause.]

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Presiding Officer observes that under the Senate rules the Presiding Officer cannot participate in debate or comment from the dais. Should that rule not be in effect, the Presiding Officer would publicly state his thanks to the majority leader for the kind comments. But that is not permitted under the rules. The Presiding Officer is unclear about the majority leader's intent. Does the majority leader intend to introduce that in the form of a resolution, or does he intend that it be simply made part of the RECORD?

Mr. LOTT. I think it would be appropriate just to be made part of the RECORD. I appreciate the ruling of the Chair on this matter, which I did not ask a question about. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I will add a half minute to what the majority leader said. I think one of the most important things that the Senator from Kansas does—and I mean this—is that, regardless of whether or not he is in agreement with you, he is looking at you. A lot of the times that doesn't happen. It means a lot when you have somebody presiding who has

the graciousness to be looking at you with respect and to be listening to the debate. He always does that. I can never tell whether he is in agreement or disagreement. That means a lot to me. I suspect that he is usually in agreement with me, but I am not so sure.

INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT OF 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 1679

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I might ask the Senator from Rhode Island if he has any questions. He said he wanted to ask some questions of me.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I would like to direct, if I might, a couple of questions to the Senator from Minnesota.

I have looked over this amendment, and it's an amendment, obviously, that is in the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee, as the Senator from Minnesota has indicated. And the amendment has just been introduced, so, obviously, there have been no hearings before the Finance Committee, and it's not a matter that has previously been considered by the Finance Committee, if I understand this correctly. I ask the Senator from Minnesota if that is accurate.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, that is accurate. Since we are not in court, and the Senator from Rhode Island is always gracious, let me go beyond the "yes or no" answer. It is not at all clear that there will be necessarily a welfare bill from the Finance Committee or a bill that I can raise this question on. We now have a vehicle out here on the floor. My feeling was that, since this amendment calls for nothing more than just to ask the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide data and analysis to us, based upon what data she has as to what is going on with welfare reform, it doesn't seem to me that this really needs a hearing. It is pretty clear and straightforward and, I think, pretty noncontroversial.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I am voting against Senator WELLSTONE's amendment because I think it is inappropriate to place it on the pending bill, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act.

I do believe it is a good idea to have the Secretary of Health and Human Services obtain information from the States as to the impact of the welfare reform law on current and former recipients of federal aid, but this critical transportation bill should be moved as expeditiously as possible to get highway, transit, and safety funding moving to the States and our communities as rapidly as possible.

When the 1996 welfare reform law was considered, I noted that only time will tell if that legislation resulted in an

unacceptable level of hardship on poor Americans, particularly children. Current law contains data collection requirements with respect to the impact of the changes in welfare law, and as Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee which funds the Department of Health and Human Services, I was pleased to provide \$26 million for Fiscal Year 1998 for the Department to undertake the kinds of research and analysis we need to determine the true impact of the 1996 law. Further, as Chairman, I will continue to monitor closely the Department's performance in administering the new welfare regime. If Senator WELLSTONE offers this amendment on an appropriate bill, I will likely support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment?

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I note that this is a piece of legislation that would direct the Secretary to develop a plan. In other words, as I read page 2 here, it says the Secretary shall develop a plan, to the extent possible based on all available information, and so forth.

What I would like to do, Mr. President, is hear from our people on the Finance Committee, which should be very shortly, and I will then see that the Senator from Minnesota has every opportunity to bring this to a vote, should he wish to, this afternoon. We will work it out. He is not going to be blocked in any fashion. But I would like to hear, and it may well be that we can accept the amendment, and that would save us all some time.

We are now just trying to check with the Finance Committee. It may be well that something from the Labor Committee is involved likewise, although it seems to me that this is pretty much a Finance Committee matter. When we get back, after our luncheon recess has concluded, I will speak to the Senator from Minnesota, and we will then be able to go from there.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Rhode Island. I say to him that I will bring the amendment to the floor in good faith with some sense of urgency, because I think it is important that we know what is happening in this matter. I take the Senator at his word. I am pleased that we will proceed this way. I say to my colleague that I hope there will be support for it. That is, of course, the whole purpose of my effort. If there should be some disagreement, then I would want, of course, the opportunity to respond to whatever other positions are taken on this amendment.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I want to discuss a very important matter relating to the safety of our Nation's highways and streets, and that is DWI-related injuries and fatalities. To use more common parlance, drunk driving. This is a problem that, in spite of many prevention efforts, remains a very serious concern in our country.

The statistics are compelling. For example, on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day 1996, those 4 days combined, there were 576 DWI-related fatalities on our Nation's highways. In that same year, 1996, nearly 1.1 million people were injured in alcohol-related crashes.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds. I think that statistic alone should get the attention of the U.S. Senate and the Congress of this country. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds throughout this country. About 3 in 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives. Alcohol-related crashes cost society \$45 billion annually, and to make matters worse, the loss of quality of life and pain and suffering costs are estimated to total over \$134 billion annually.

My home State of New Mexico is not exempt from these problems. In fact, the National Traffic Safety Administration reports that my State of New Mexico leads the country in DWI-related deaths per capita. The rate in New Mexico is 11.79 deaths per 100,000 people. This rate is 19 percent higher than the No. 2 State, which is Mississippi, and it is more than twice the national rate, which is merely 5.05 deaths per 100,000 people.

Indeed, these statistics paint a very grim picture. What makes the picture even more tragic, Mr. President, is that DWI-related injuries and fatalities are preventable. It clearly is within our national interest to do what we can to reverse this statistic. One obvious way to prevent further deaths is to ensure the sobriety of drivers. That is why I am proud to cosponsor the bill that Senators LAUTENBERG and DEWINE have introduced to establish a national blood-alcohol content standard of .08. Additionally, I am cosponsoring Senator DORGAN's bill to prohibit open containers of alcohol in automobiles. I urge my colleagues to help pass these bills this year.

Another contributing factor to the problem that I believe would make a significant difference in eliminating the problem is the practice of selling alcoholic beverages through drive-up